The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

Entered as second-class matter September 30, 1912, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1918.

Are You REGISTERED?

WHOLE NO. 1940 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JUNE 15, 1948 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 38, NO. 24

Administration of T-H Law Assailed In AFL Report

In testimony before the Congressional "Watchdog" Committee on Labor-Management Relations, AFL President William Green attacked the administration of the Taft-Hartley law which has served to bring chaos in collective bargaining procedures. Because of its importance as a documented indictment of the restrictive provisions of the law, and the crusade waged against unions by NLRB General Counsel Robert N. Denham, the following supplemental report submitted by Mr. Green is printed in full text:

JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD

The Taft-Hartley Act does not change the fundamental jurisdiction of the National Labor Relations Board as originally set forth in the Wagner Act. However, because of the new provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act, particularly the union shop elections, the board and general counsel have adopted a policy of extending the board's jurisdiction to industries and situations which the board previously had refused to handle.

The chief policy-making case on this question involved the Liddon-White Truck Company, Inc., in which the board asserted its jurisdiction over a retail truck sales company by a 3-2 decision. The minority opinion in this case did not deny that the board had authority to handle this case but argued that, in view of the board's backlog "we believe it would be better for the board to concentrate attention upon expediting action on cases in important industries, rather than dissipating its energies upon matters that would normally be the concern of the states. . . . Although this case relates only to a retail automobile dealer, we also voice concern at the general change in policy that it portends."

Since this case, the board has more or less reversed itself by denying jurisdiction over a chain of 13 retail grocery stores in San Antonio, Tex. Consequently, board policy on this matter is still open to question.

In certain other industries, the question of board jurisdiction is still unsettled. Unions in the building construction, laundry and other service industries have no way of knowing whether their activities do or do not come within the board's jurisdiction. Although the board's general counsel has definitely asserted jurisdiction over the building and construction industry for purposes of union shop elections a federal district judge in Colorado (Federal Judge J. Foster Symes) denied a board petition for an injunction against the Denver Building Trades Council on the ground that the building construction industry does not fall within interstate commerce.

UNION SHOP

In perhaps its most serious action to date, the NLRB ruled on May 21 that it would not hold union shop elections in those states where union shops are banned by the state law (In the matter of Giant Food Shopping Centers, Inc.). By a 3-2 majority the board ruled that to hold elections in states where union shops are outlawed "would lead only to the circumvention and frustration of state law." The minority opinion, on the other hand, attacked this position by arguing that the majority opinion in effect declares that "A state offense becomes, ipso facto, a federal offense." The minority pointed out that what the board was actually doing was stating that the federal government should help the states enforce state laws. It should be noted that in several of the states in which the union shop is outlawed no enforcement procedure has been adopted. In these cases the board's action amounts to its saying "If the state won't enforce its own laws, the federal government will be glad to do so."

FREE SPEECH

The most damaging effect of the Taft-Hartley Act which stands out from the reports by AFL representatives is the impetus which the new free speech provision has given to the antiunion tactics of employers. The board is helping employers who wish to defeat unionism in their plants by giving a liberal interpretation to the free speech provision. The latest action of the board in this connection is to reverse its Clark Brothers doctrine concerning the right of an employer to compel employes to listen to an employer's antiunion speech on company time and property. The new decision (In the matter of Babcock & Wilcox Co.) states that such action is perfectly legitimate and cannot be considered an unfair labor practice. In this particular case the board trial examiner found that the employer on each of four separate occasions summoned the employes of the first and second shifts to a particular part of the plant during working hours. On each of these occasions the plant superintendent delivered a prepared speech which the trial examiner labeled as "antiunion."

PLANT GUARDS

The Taft-Hartley Act states that no labor union may be certified as a representative of guards if it is "affiliated directly or indirectly with an organization which admits to membership employes other than guards."

In interpreting this provision the board recently ruled (In the matter of Schenley Distilleries, Inc., Old Quaker Division) that federal labor unions directly affiliated with the American Federation of Labor cannot be certified as bargaining representatives. Under this ruling these employes who have voluntarily organized themselves into a labor union have no way in which to be represented according to their own choosing.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ELECTIONS IN PLANTS ON STRIKE

On February 25 the board for the first time ordered a collective bargaining election at a plant where a strike was in progress. (In the matter of the Pipe Machinery Company). The direction of this election has involved the board in a very complicated and time-consuming procedure made necessary by a special provision of the Taft-Hartley law which states that "employes on strike who are not entitled to reinstatement shall not be eligible to vote."

The circumstances of this particular case indicate that approximately 120 workers were employed in the plant when a strike was called by the independent International Association of Machinists. Since that time a small number of strikers have returned to work, and in addition the company has hired a larger number of nonstrikers. At the time of the decision the company had on its payroll approximately 70 employes while the Machinists claimed that 95 of the original employes were still on strike. Meanwhile another independent union had been formed among the nonstriking employes.

In its direction of election the board stated that it would allow both strikers and nonstrikers to vote in the election subject to challenge. The results of the election held during March disclosed that out of 160 eligible voters, the ballots of 148 were challenged. This was a natural result since the union challenged the votes of the nonstrikers while the company or the newly-formed independent union challenged the votes of the strikers.

The board is now faced with the very difficult, if not insurmountable, task of deciding which of the strikers are not entitled to vote because their jobs have been permanently taken by nonstrikers. The results of this determination can only have the effect of adding to the confusion already existing at the plant, lowering production and interfering with the normal process of collective bargaining.

INTERPRETATION OF SECTION 8 (b) (1)

Paragraph 8 (b) (1) of the Taft-Hartley Act states, "It shall be an unfair labor practice for a labor organization or its agents to restrain or coerce employes in the exercise of rights guaranteed in Section 7."

Although this provision of the law is extremely objectionable, it should be noted that the legislative history behind this section shows very clearly that this paragraph was not directed at the normal organizational practices of labor organizations. In particular it should be noted that the word "interfere" which was originally included in this clause was specifically deleted because it was thought that this would prohibit labor unions from pursuing their regular organizational activities.

The general counsel of the board has, however, become a crusader in behalf of a very strict interpretation of this clause, defying congressional intent. He has invoked this clause to cover any type of union activity which he has wished outlawed and which could not be covered by any other unfair labor practices. There are two specific cases which illustrate this point.

In the case of the Perry-Norvell Company, Huntington, W. Va., the general counsel alleged that a strike called by a CIO union constituted an unfair labor practice because it restrained and coerced the nonstriking employes. The trial examiner rejected this contention of the board after a very close examination of the facts involved. He found that no actual restraint or coercion was involved and that particular threats and violence which the general counsel had cited amounted in actuality to only "minor clashes on the picket line."

The general counsel had contended that the strike itself was "the coercive element" on the theory that other workers, not members of the striking union, were deprived of their right to representation. In answer to this argument the trial examiner stated very clearly that this "theory as stated here amounts to the concept of a strike as a conspiracy, a concept which has long been obsolete."

In the second case, Sealright Pacific, Ltd., the general counsel charged that an AFL union's activities on the picket line constituted an unfair labor practice under this section. The alleged unfair labor practices consisted of the behavior of the striking AFL union's pickets at the premises of two distributing concerns which normally handled the Sealright products. There was no allegation that the picketing was anything but peaceful, but the general counsel argued that even peaceful picketing was coercive because it forced the employes of these two distributing companies to quit work and to stop handling the products of the striking concern.

The trial examiner emphatically rejected this contention and recommended that the complaint be dismissed, stating that peaceful picketing must be regarded as privileged free speech even under the Taft-Hartley Act.

Labor's Political Activity Pays Off; Antiunion Forces Beaten In 3 States

Washington.—The effectiveness of the educational activity of Labor's League for Political Education has been "amply demonstrated" in Iowa, North Carolina and Florida, where primary tests brought defeat, respectively, to an antilabor governor, an antilabor United States Senator and an antilabor Attorney General.

"The results in Iowa, North Carolina and Florida show very clearly that laboring people are very much on their toes this year," said Joseph D. Keenan, director of LLPE. "We have been regaled with stories that labor's political education program is not effective. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The votes of aroused, intelligent citizens among the working population of three states have now sounded the political death knell for three foes of labor.

"I trust that this demonstration of labor's determination and ability to carry out the principle of defeating labor's enemies will not be lost on those who have been so eager to belittle the effectiveness of political education among the American people."

In Iowa, the working people supported William Beardsley for governor in the Republican primary, and the incumbent, Governor Robert Blue, was handed one of the worst trouncings ever sustained by any officeholder in that state. Blue had consistently opposed labor's interests.

In North Carolina, in the Democratic primary, the wage earners went after the scalp of Senator William B. Umstead, who had voted for the Taft-Hartley Act despite labor's pleas. Umstead was decisively defeated by former Governor J. M. Broughton.

In Florida, in the Democratic primary for governor, Tom Watson took a bad licking. As Attorney General, Watson was a notorious union baiter, and the workers remembered his record and made sure that it became thoroughly known to all citizens. After taking a beating in the gubernatorial primary, Watson entered the race for justice of the State Supreme Court. Forced into a run-off, he was decisively defeated.

Labor and other liberals in Iowa not only effected the trouncing of antilabor Governor Blue, but they also accomplished the defeat of Representative John W. Gwynne in the Third District. Gwynne voted for the Taft-Hartley Act and had a consistently bad record, which included a raw attempt to amend the Wage and Hour Law to make it easy for dishonest employers to cheat underpaid workers.

"The results in these three states are most heartening," Mr. Keenan said. "They prove that we can accomplish what we have set out to do. But it takes plenty of hard work. State and city branches of LLPE throughout the nation should be greatly encouraged by what has just taken place in these three states, which are not the most highly industrialized states by any means."

Accord Reached In Dispute At Oak Ridge Atomic Plant

Oak Ridge, Tenn.—The labor dispute at the National Atomic Laboratory here was ended by a settlement providing an average hourly wage increase of 15½ cents.

While complete terms of the agreement had not been announced as this edition went to press, it was understood that workers at the plant operated by the Carbide and Carbon Chemicals Corporation will receive additional vacations under the contract.

The new agreement is subject to ratification by the 875 members of the AFL's Atomic Trades and Labor Council who are employed by the corporation.

The settlement was reached after protracted negotiations between representatives of the AFL union and the corporation who met with a staff member of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. Talks were resumed by the parties following rejection by the union of a "final" offer of the corporation for an increase of 10 cents per hour.

The dispute originated in November, 1947, when the Carbide and Carbon Chemicals Corporation, which had taken over operation of the plant from the Monsanto Chemical Company, sought changes in the union's contract to make it conform with contracts in other plants.

The union opposed this move since it would mean a sharp reduction in working standards. When a deadlock ensued and a strike threatened, the government obtained an injunction against the union under the Taft-Hartley law which forced workers to remain on their jobs for a period of 80 days. The injunction process was resorted to in spite of the fact that the union offered to submit the issues to arbitration, a proposal which was flatly rejected by the corporation.

Following the dissolution of the injunction after the 80-day waiting period, collective bargaining negotiations were resumed which ultimately led to the settlement.

In Washington, Cyrus S. Ching, director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, commenting on the agreement, said it was evident that neither side wished to injure the public welfare and safety by stopping work at the laboratory.

Construction Value Rises 11% In May; Employment In Industry Tops 2,000,000

Washington.—Construction activity in May, as measured by the value of new work put in place, rose by 11 percent to reach $1.4 billion, according to preliminary estimates of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

This was a gain of $417 million, or 40 percent, over the dollar value of new construction put in place during May, 1947.

Construction contractors added 98,000 workers in May, which brought employment in the industry to 2,064,000, 5 percent above the revised estimate for April. Employment this May exceeded that for May, 1947, by almost 200,000 workers. Continuing the records established in March and April of this year, the employment level in May was the highest for any May since 1942.

Privately financed housebuilding accounted for more than a third of the rise in May expenditures for new construction. The dollar volume of this work was 10 percent above April expenditures, and 62 percent above those for May, 1947. Following the development of new residential neighborhoods, commercial construction increased notably in May to a dollar value of almost $100 million. Industrial construction continued its slow decline in expenditures, edging down to $114 million this May, nearly a fifth less than in May of last year.

The dollar volume of public construction, influenced largely by a 28 percent rise in highway and street work, increased by $51 million during the month to reach a total of $338 million, the greatest since last October's postwar high. All types of public construction shared in the gain, but to a lesser degree than highway and street work.

By the end of May, $6 billion had been spent for new construction of all types. This was 35 percent (or $1.6 billion) above expenditures for the first 5 months of 1947. Important increases occurred in private nonfarm residential building (62 percent to $2.5 billion), private commercial construction (51 percent to $443 million), privately financed construction of public utilities (36 percent to $888 million), publicly financed educational construction (97 percent to $175 million), and federal conservation and development work (62 percent to $185 million).

ILGWU REPORTS $500,000 GIFTS TO ITALY, ISRAEL

Forest Park, Pa.—David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, announced that the ILGWU has sent $225,000 to Italy in the last 6 months to assist in the economic rehabilitation of the country and promote the fight against communism.

In his report to the union's general executive board in session here at Unity House, the ILGWU vacation resort, Mr. Dubinsky said the union also contributed $200,000 to support the Israeli labor organization, Histadrut.

The donations were reported as part of a comprehensive review of the ILGWU's financial position. Assets of the union, Mr. Dubinsky said, rose from $6,427,000 in January, 1945, to $9,295,000 last May 1.

HOUSE VOTES 30% HIKE IN RAILROAD PENSIONS

Washington.—A bill raising railroad pensions by 20 percent and cutting railroad unemployment contributions passed the House by a 380 to 0 vote. The bill has also been approved by a Senate committe.

The measure was introduced to legalize an agreement reached by labor and railroad organizations. Under its terms, a sliding scale for employes' contributions to unemployment insurance would be substituted for the present 3 percent contribution.

As long as the reserve in the insurance fund is $450,000,000 or more, the individuals' contribution would be one-half of 1 percent. The rate would increase one-half of 1 percent for each $50,000,000 the fund fell below that figure. It would go to 3 percent when the fund slumped to $250,000,000.

PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN IS INAUGURATED BY AFL

Washington.—To promote a more widespread understanding of the aims, programs and ideals of the American Federation of Labor, and to stress labor's part in the American way of life generally, the AFL, for the first time in its history, will inaugurate an integrated over-all program of national public relations, it was announced by William Green, president. He said:

"Today, more than ever before, it is essential that labor's point of view, and labor's stake in our way of life, should be made clear to Americans everywhere—forcefully, honestly, and without distortion. In the past, without a formal public relations program to do just that, labor's side of the picture has not always been either fully or sympathetically covered.

"At a recent meeting in Milwaukee, the Executive Council decided to set aside a substantial sum of money for a broad public relations program. We have appointed a professional organization, Owen and Chappell, Inc., New York, to execute that program, and we intend to keep on with our efforts until our objectives are attained."

Job Injury Rate Up In 1st Quarter Below '47 Total

Washington.—In a seasonal reversal of a declining trend, the manufacturing injury-frequency rate turned upward in the first 3 months of 1948, according to reports received by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor.

From a low level of 13.4 disabling injuries per 1,000,000 employe-hours worked in December, 1947, the all-manufacturing injury-frequency rate moved to 13.6 in January, to 14.1 in February, and to 14.5 in March.

The average rate of 14.1 for the entire first quarter of 1948, however, was not significantly different from the average of 14.3 for the fourth quarter of 1947. In comparison with the first quarter averages of 16.0 in 1947 and 18.2 in 1946, it represents a substantial reduction in the frequency of disabling work injuries.

It is estimated that approximately 114,800 employes of manufacturing establishments were disabled for one or more days because of work injuries experienced during the first quarter of 1948. About 400 of the injured workers died as a result of their injuries and about 5,400 others were known to have suffered permanent physical impairments up to the time the reports for the quarter were prepared. Later information concerning the final outcome of the injuries which were first reported as temporary disabilities may require some increase in these estimates of the more serious cases.

Working time lost during the quarter by these injured persons is estimated as about 2,296,000 man-days, representing an estimated value of over $18,000,000 in wages alone. This represents only a portion of the total cost which will accrue from these injuries. It includes no allowance for the continuing economic losses arising from the many deaths and permanent impairments nor for the hospital, medical and other costs incidental to the treatment of the injuries.

The estimate of 114,800 disabling injuries is 3,100 below the estimated total for the fourth quarter of 1947. Even more favorable, it is 12,200 less than the corresponding estimate for the first quarter of 1947.

AFL-DONATED DRUG SAVES TWENTY LIVES

Vienna, Austria.—Recognition of the valuable, far-flung foreign relief activities of the American Federation of Labor came from the Socialist party here.

Action by the AFL in providing 300 grams of the new miracle drug, streptomycin, was credited with saving the lives of 20 tubercular Viennese children.

This news item reflects but a small part of the good work being done under the auspices of Labor's League for Human Rights, the official foreign relief arm of the AFL.

RAILROAD AGREES TO BAN DISCRIMINATION IN HIRING

New York.—The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad agreed to hire dining car employes without regard to discrimination against Negroes, according to an announcement by the New York State Commission Against Discrimination and the Massachusetts Fair Employment Practice Commission.

The statement said the agreement had been reached after complaints charged the railroad with violating antidiscrimination laws of both states.

"We are happy to note," the announcement said, "that the railroad company will select all its employes on the basis of merit alone, without regard to race, creed or color." It added that the railroad company had shown "very fine cooperation throughout this investigation."

Vetoed Social Security Bill Passed; Deprives 750,000 Persons of Benefits

Washington.—Congress ran roughshod over President Truman's veto of a social security bill which he said would deprive 750,000 legally deserving persons of old-age and unemployment insurance benefits.

The House vote to override was 297 to 75, which was 49 more than the necessary two-thirds majority. The Senate vote was 65 to 12.

Weeks ago AFL President William Green exposed the "joker" in the bill which would exempt three-quarters of a million persons from coverage under the Social Security system. Those affected are chiefly commission and life insurance salesmen, pieceworkers, truck and taxicab drivers, miners, jorneymen tailors, and other self-employed persons.

"In June, 1947," the President's message stated, "the Supreme Court held that these employes have been justly and legally entitled to Social Security protection since the beginning of the program in 1935. I cannot approve legislation which would deprive many hundreds of thousands of employes, as well as their families, of Social Security benefits when the need for expanding our social insurance system is so great."

The measure allows an additional $184,000,000 annual federal contribution at the rate of $5 a month for the aged needy and the blind and $3 a month for dependent children, but President Truman dismissed the increases as "far short" of the "substantial improvements in our public assistance program which I have recommended many times.

In other action, the House passed a new social security bill which likewise falls far short of the program recommended by both the AFL and the President.

The bill makes eligible for old age payments municipal and state employes, if the employing governments approve. In the eligible group also would be employes of non-profit organizations provided the federal government agrees.

Other groups which would be permitted to participate are construction and maintenance workers of the Tennessee Valley Authority, off-the-farm processors of fruits and vegetables, domestic workers in college fraternity houses, employes of American-owned international air carriers, farm loan and farm credit institution employes and employes in military exchanges.

Inflation Curbs Urged For Balanced Economy

Washington.—Boris Shishkin, chief economist for the AFL, called for action by Congress to curb inflation and to balance our economy at a high level of production.

Shishkin spoke on the "America United" program which is broadcast each Sunday from 1-1:30 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time, over the nation-wide network of the National Broadcasting Company. The current series of 4 programs is sponsored by the American Federation of Labor.

Participating in the round-table discussion program with Mr. Shishkin were: Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney, Representative Frank B. Keefe, and Dr. Emerson P. Schmidt, representing the United States Chamber of Commerce.

Shishkin supported a move to increase federal workers' pay as a means of affording relief to one segment of the population which has been unable to keep abreast of rising living costs. He said:

"We have to balance our economy at the level of high production, and the only way to do that is to provide upward adjustments where needed. That means that we have to have a restraint on the movement of inflation, that we have to have specific measures proposed by President Truman and others, if we are to keep from pricing ourselves out of the market."

Mr. Shishkin attacked the arguments of Representative Keefe and Dr. Schmidt who concentrated solely on the need to restrict money supply as the only effective restraint on inflation. "To cut back money supply alone, he asserted, would mean an economic balance at a lower rate in production of goods which would be consumed only by those fortunate enough to have adequate purchasing power.

Senator O'Mahoney took the position that it is essential for Congress to act to reduce the cost of living.

"If Congress does not act," he said, "we cannot avoid a depression."

The Senator emphasized figures released by the Federal Reserve Board showing that in 1947 more than one-fourth of all the consuming units in the United States are now finding it impossible to meet the cost of living from their current income.

Top NLRB Officials Unable to Agree On Extent of Board's Jurisdiction

Washington.—The Taft-Hartley law is so complex and difficult to interpret that even the persons charged with its administration are unable to agree upon policy to be followed.

This was attested to by the fact that in testimony before the Congressional "Watchdog" Committee on Labor-Management Relations, Robert N. Denham, general counsel for the National Labor Relations Board, and Paul M. Herzog, board chairman, were in sharp disagreement on the question of how far the board should extend its jurisdiction over local businesses.

Meanwhile, unions and employers involved sit on the sidelines confused and bewildered by the absence of a definite policy under the law which hamstrings and delays their operations.

Denham, taking an extreme view, declared the board should hasten to take jurisdiction over every business "affecting commerce," and said the law permits no use of discretion by the board. He said:

"I don't agree with the board that it can refuse to take a case over which it has jurisdiction. Such discretionary authority does not exist. The argument that an agency has enough business and doesn't want any more on its docket is untenable.

"A secondary boycott hurts a small business man just as much as a large one. He has just as much right to protection. This is the only tribunal that can do anything for him. I don't know how he can be denied his day in court."

On the other hand, Chairman Herzog asserted that the board is not anxious to move into uncharted fields and has found no legal obligation to do so. He said:

"The board members' determination as to what will best effectuate the policies of the act must presumably prevail, unless and until Congress or the courts tell us that we are wrong * * *

"The problem is far from simple," and he added that "in the absence of further legislative guidance," the NLRB would have to work on a "case-to-case basis."

"Meanwhile, it is all too clear that the board will be fully occupied, even if it decides to limit itself to those industries over which it has traditionally asserted jurisdiction."

Members of the NLRB have little to say about the character of the cases that come to them, because the regional directors who make the initial administrative determinations are subject to the general counsel's control. Mr. Denham complained that the board's members had the power of veto if they were permitted to refuse to act on cases in which he had issued complaints and in which hearings had been held.

PAINTERS UNION ENLARGES INSURANCE PROTECTION PLAN

Washington.—Members of the AFL's Painters Union here and their dependents will benefit under an enlarged insurance plan to go in effect on July 1.

Addition of complete medical and surgical care for members of Locals 368, 797, and 890 will round out one of the most complete protection plans for union members anywhere in the nation.

AFL TRANSIT WORKERS WIN 5-CENT INCREASE

Los Angeles.—The threatened strike of Los Angeles Transit Lines workers was averted here.

A settlement was reached between the company and the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employes, AFL. Workers are to get an increase of 5 cents an hour in pay and will continue to work 40 hours a week. Arbitration will be started soon to determine whether the company is to pay an additional 5 cents an hour to all workers. An agreement was reached on a pension plan.

FTC ORDERS BRICK WORKS TO CEASE FIXING PRICES

Washington.—The Federal Trade Commission ordered 9 New England brick manufacturers to end what the commission called a price-fixing combination.

The commission said the manufacturers' combined sales averaged 75,000,000 bricks a year and their production in 1944 was about 74 percent of all bricks shipped by New England brick manufacturers.

The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE
SUPPLEMENT

Are You REGISTERED?

WILLIAM GREEN, President
WASHINGTON, D. C., FRIDAY, JUNE 18, 1948
GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer

Drive for Adjournment of Congress Jeopardizes Bills of Interest to Labor

Washington.—The current drive in Congress for early adjournment has placed in jeopardy many proposed bills of vital interest to American workers.

As the opening of the Republican National Convention neared, GOP Congressional leaders turned on the steam in both House and Senate in efforts to clean up the legislative slate. However, the prospects for adjournment as scheduled appeared slim according to some observers.

Caught in the last-minute jam of legislation were important appropriation bills, the proposed housing measure, and bills to increase the pay of Federal postal and other employes.

Buried completely and passed over by the Republican-controlled 80th Congress were bills to boost the minimum wage and provide a system of national health insurance, among others.

Continuing its habit of overriding Presidential vetoes, the Congress added 2 more to its score by enacting into law measures to transfer the United States Employment Service out of the Labor Department, and to exempt the railroads from coverage under the anti-trust laws in so far as certain rate-fixing agreements are concerned.

Labor has gained little if anything from the results of the session up to the time this edition went to press.

The Housing bill which passed the Senate met a stumbling block in the House where the committee charged with its consideration finally reported out a watered-down version eliminating the provisions calling for the construction of public housing facilities for low-income families. The results of this acton may mean no housing legislation by this Congress, since observers believe the Senate will insist on the public housing features of the bill and time will not permit the working out of a compromise in conference.

The social security legislation approved by the House offers only "meager crumbs" in the way of extended coverage and other improvements, according to AFL President William Green.

The transfer of the USES to the Federal Security Agency was accomplished by resorting to the trick of tacking a rider on the appropriation bill for that agency. President Truman vetoed the measure, but the "hurry-up" Congress overrode the veto. The AFL, as well as newspaper editors, vigorously attacked the technique of using money bills to pass legislation, but objections went unheeded.

The adjournment of Congress, whenever accomplished, means the automatic death of all bills not acted upon. New measures must be introduced and the process of hearings started over again when the new Congress convenes next January.

Green Endorses New Book On Trade Union Movement

Washington.—AFL President William Green, in a communication addressed to all AFL affiliates, gave his endorsement to a new book on the labor movement and urged all AFL officers and members to purchase a copy.

The book, entitled "Tomorrow Is Beautiful," was written by Lucy Robins Lang, an author well known in labor circles in New York.

Declaring that purchase of the book will represent "money well spent," Mr. Green announced that copies should be ordered now in order to take advantage of the pre-publication price of $3.50, the lowest possible minimum. He urged that orders be placed for any number of copies, from 1 to 100, or more, with the Library of the American Federation of Labor. Checks in payment for copies should be made out to the MacMillan Company, publishers of the volume.

Commenting on the book, Mr. Green said:

"This book presents in a most dramatic and educational way the historic growth and development of the labor movement in the United States. It is my opinion that it ought to be read by all who are interested in the origin, growth, and expansion of organized labor. Its dramatic feature is set forth in the story of the McNamaras and the tragic events which took place during the period when they lived and functioned.

"Pen portraits of two generations are presented in this most interesting book through the historic facts included in the volume. Those who read it will learn anew of the noble, humane influences which inspired workers to serve and sacrifice in the formation and establishment of trade unions. I can assure you it is a story which is fascinating and inspiring, as well as educational and convincing."

Fact Finding Board Blames T-H Law For Maritime Industry Labor Dispute

Washington.—A Presidential fact-finding board placed the blame for the labor dispute in the maritime industry squarely on the Taft-Hartley law which restricts established industry practices of hiring men through the union.

A threatened strike was averted at the last minute by the issuance of temporary restraining orders by federal courts in New York, Cleveland, and San Francisco. The 10-day orders maintain the status quo pending completion of hearings on government requests for an 80-day injunction under the Taft-Hartley law.

The 5-man board headed by Harry Shulman, Yale law professor, said:

"What the situation would have been, had the National Labor Relations Act remained unamended, must necessarily be a matter of conjecture. But it is entirely clear that in the present circumstances the basic dispute, which overshadows all the other issues in controversy and which has thus far rendered agreement on any point impossible, arises from the amendment of the National Labor Relations Act by the Taft-Hartley Act."

The report filed at the White House said the threatened stoppage was not quite the same as a normal dispute.

"With respect to the crucial issue of employment it is not the unions but the employers who, believing themselves compelled by the new statute to do so, are seeking a change in the current contracts and practices," it said.

"The unions contend not so much that the current provisions are valid under the Taft-Hartley Act as that they should not be deemed invalid until so declared by competent judicial authority. They urge more fervently that the cited provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act, as construed by the employers, are wholly unsuited to the maritime industry and cannot be applied to it without complete disruption of its labor relations.

"The unions point out that in the maritime industry, unlike some shoreside industries, the employment practices were established not merely as a means of achieving union security, but primarily as a means of eliminating inefficient, oppressive and uncivilized employment practices which had developed over a period of years and which were harmful not only to employes but also to employers. * * *"

3,000 QUIT LEWIS' UNION; JOIN AFL'S PAPER WORKERS

Berlin, N. H.—John L. Lewis' biggest New England local, composed of 3,000 pulp and paper workers, marched out of the catch-all District 50 of his United Mine Workers to join the American Federation of Labor.

A spokesman said employes of the Brown Paper Co. paper mill here voted 2,058 to 298 to join the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers, AFL, as a protest against Mr. Lewis' "tyranny."

The National Labor Relations Board election capped dispute that began nearly a year ago when several local officers rebelled at the appointment of A. D. Lewis, brother of the UMW leader, as District 50 president. Brown Co. group had belonged to the UMW since 1941.

BETTER SERVICE TO LABOR URGED ON LIBRARY GROUP

Atlantic City, N. J.—Library service to labor groups should be broadened and intensified, the opening session of the 67th annual conference of the American Library Association was told by speakers addressing a meeting of the joint committee on library service to labor groups.

Philips Bradley of the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Illinois, said that only a few libraries had done anything to serve labor in their communities.

MORE UNIONS FILE NON-COMMIE OATHS

Washington.—The National Labor Relations Board reported that 85,101 officers of national and local unions have filed the non-Communist affidavits required under the Taft-Hartley law.

This was an increase of more than 10,304, or 14 percent, over the number who filed at the end of April and an increase of 113 percent above the number in compliance with the law as of the first of March.

Of the 159 national and international unions in compliance with the filing requirement, 89 are affiliated with the AFL. At the local union level, 6,622 AFL units represent more than two-thirds of the total locals which have complied.

AFL Proposes 12-Point Broad Liberal Program For Inclusion In Republican Party Platform

Text Of AFL Proposals For Republican Platform

Following is the full text of the proposals submitted by AFL President William Green to the resolutions committee of the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia for its consideration in drafting the Republican platform.

TAFT-HARTLEY ACT

We demand the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act and the reenactment of the Labor Relations Act which was in effect prior to the enactment of the Taft-Hartley Act. The 10 months of experience with the Taft-Hartley Act has demonstrated it to be a complete failure. These 10 months of administration of the act has shown clearly:

First. That contrary to the act's preamble (Sec. 1 (b)), which reads, ". . . it is the purpose and policy of this act, in order to promote the full flow of commerce, to prescribe the legitimate rights of both employes and employers in their relations affecting commerce . . ." the act undermines the constitutional, civil and economic rights of workers.

Second. The act has failed to encourage the peaceful settlement of management-labor disputes and to reduce the number of strikes. Through its many one-sided provisions in favor of management, it has encouraged the antiunion employer to adopt an arbitrary and hostile attitude toward employes. Thus it has engendered in employes suspicion and resentment and actually created industrial unrest.

Third. The act is impossible of administration. Its records reveal an increasing backlog of cases—almost double the largest number in the history of the board—seriously delaying the settlement of labor disputes and further engendering industrial unrest.

Fourth. The act is discriminatory class legislation. The requirement that trade union officers execute anticommunistic affidavits without requiring a similar affidavit to be executed by employers and management officials is clearly class legislation and an invasion of the field of civil rights of citizens of the United States.

Fifth. The act is an invasion of the civil rights of citizens of the United States in that it prohibits union political activity. This denial of the right of free speech and freedom of the press is obviously contrary to the provisions of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Sixth. The act resurrects government by injunction, thus placing the full weight of government power on the side of employers in industrial disputes at the discretion of a single individual without restraint—the judge issuing the injunction. The availability to employers of such government power presages the ultimate destruction of most trade unions.

Seventh. The act contains provisions which invite destructive and delaying litigation in labor disputes and undermines the well-established American policy of collective bargaining. The use of these tactics actually creates industrial unrest.

Eighth. Union shop elections have disproved the claims of the sponsors of the act and sustains the assertions of the American Federation of Labor that union members and other employes approve of union shop agreements. Over 70 percent of the cases filed with the board during the last 9 months have been requests for union shop elections. Less than 1 percent of these elections have rejected the union shop. Over 90 percent of the persons voting have favored the union shop. Unions should be free to negotiate union conditions of work without interference.

Ninth. The act outlaws secondary boycotts and thus interferes with and restricts legitimate trade union activities. Since unions are forbidden to aid or assist one another against a secondary employer whose efforts and resources are being devoted to the defeat of the union's demands, they are, in effect, compelled to contribute to their own destruction.

Tenth. The act, as a whole, completely undermines trade unions and prevents effective collective bargaining and it does not promote peaceful industrial relations.

PROGRAM TO CURB INFLATION

We demand an effective and comprehensive program to curb inflation. This program should mobilize the voluntary efforts of all groups of citizens—business, labor, consumers, farmers—and supplement voluntary effort with government action where and when necessary.

For more than a year inflation has been cutting away the purchasing power of the American people. Large segments of our population—workers, pensioners, annuitants, persons living on small incomes—are seriously affected. Due to high prices, several million families are unable to buy sufficient quantities of the necessities of life. More than 12,000,000 families spent more than they earned in 1947, either to meet high living costs or to buy the family equipment they needed, according to a Federal Reserve Board study just released.

The Consumer Price Index of the Labor Department, after declining from January through March, rose again in April to a new all-time peak, slightly above the previous high point. Prices of the necessities of life will probably continue to rise unless effective measures are taken to check inflation. The demand for American goods under our program for European aid and our increased military appropriations exert an upward pressure on prices which further threatens the standard of living of American workers and other low-income groups. While consumer prices rose 14 percent in 1947 over 1946, incomes of American consumers rose only 10 percent. A program to check this price rise is essential.

Already a number of leading manufacturers have shown their desire to bring about a much needed downward adjustment of prices. Inflation can be checked, however, only by a concerted effort of all groups. Under a free enterprise system the first step should be a vigorous program of voluntary action. Such action must be initiated by the federal government calling upon citizens' organizations to develop a joint program and mobilize their efforts to make it effective.

The program of the Republican Party to curb inflation should make the following provisions:

a. Authorize the Economic Advisors to call into consultation cooperating committees of business men, labor, agricultural and other groups to develop a joint program to check inflation. The full influence and prestige of the United States government should be placed behind this voluntary effort.

b. Strengthen the voluntary allocation program for scarce materials already operating under the United States Department of Commerce.

c. Follow monetary and fiscal policies which will check abnormal increase in money supply and bank credit.

d. Carry on a vigorous program to sell United States Savings Bonds to American consumers.

A STRONG DECLARATION FOR WORLD PEACE

We urge a strong declaration for world peace, reasserting firm belief in the principles of the United Nations and disavowing all ambition for territorial gains and economic or cultural imperialism. Further, we urge an unequivocal position on the following:

a. We favor strengthening of the United Nations by,

(1) Abolishing the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council and to substitute therefor majority rule on all matters within its jurisdiction;

(2) By an amendment to the charter which would provide for direct citizen participation in United Nations deliberations in accordance with the report of the Executive Council to the San Francisco convention set out at pages 38 and 39 thereof.

b. We urge vigorous opposition to universal military training in peace time. It breeds wars.

c. We urge vigorous prosecution of the European Recovery Program throughout its full contemplated period of operation in a manner that will assure the rehabilitation of the western European nations. Nothing less than the full program will do the job.

FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION

Endorsement of a broad program of federal aid to education should be demanded consisting of four parts. Such aid is to be given without federal control so long as the states meet minimum standards laid down in the legislation for their general guidance in the expenditure of the funds. The endorsement of federal aid should include:

a. A billion dollar program of federal aid to raise the standards of the schools themselves as educational institutions and to provide equal educational opportunity for every child without discrimination because of race, sex, creed or nationality.

b. Federal funds made available for services to needy children to protect their health and welfare and to make it possible for them to remain in school.

c. A Labor Extension Service to be established in the Department of Labor similar to the extension service conducted by the Department of Agriculture for farmers.

d. The school lunch program to be on a basis adequate to extend its full benefits to every child in America.

PUBLIC HOUSING

We demand authorization of an adequate federal housing program to provide decent housing facilities for the large number of low income families of our nation which cannot secure adequate accommodations.

While the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics states that 90,000 dwelling units were started in construction during April of 1948, few of these units will be placed on the market at a figure that will be within the reach of the income of many of the wage earners. The federal housing program should provide for publicly-assisted low-rent housing similar to the program launched before the war under the United States Housing Act. These locally initiated and developed projects are vital to balanced reconstruction and healthy cleaning-up of our communities. Home ownership is the necessary and desirable goal of most American workers. The program should, therefore, provide for assistance to American workers in the purchase of homes for equitable and reasonable financial charges, corresponding to the risk assumed by the lender, but at a figure that will bring the purchase of homes within the reach of workers.

This program should be based firmly on the principle that the availability of a decent home to every family is the responsibility of the whole community.

TAXATION

In the future tax revision consideration should be given to the following:

a. Priority should be given to the elimination of imposed excise taxes which contribute to inflationary price levels and are burdensome to producers and consumers.

b. Personal income tax exemptions should be increased to relieve family income necessary to maintain adequate minimum living standards.

c. Federal and state tax systems should be integrated to eliminate existing overlapping, confusion and duplication.

d. Loopholes in federal and state income and gift tax laws should be eliminated and administration should be strengthened.

SOCIAL SECURITY

We urge commitment to a strong program for Social Insurance to include:

1. Universal coverage of all wage earners both in the continental United States and its territories.
2. Voluntary retirement at the age of 60.
3. A substantial increase in all benefits.
4. The provision of sick benefits under unemployment compensation laws.

Approximately 40 percent of all wage earners are still without protection under the Social Security Act against the hazards to the family of premature death of the wage earner and dependent old age. Employment in agriculture, domestic service, nonprofit institutions, self-employment and federal employment not covered by the Civil Service Retirement Act should be covered by the Social Security Act, with application to all lands under United States jurisdiction.

The present benefits paid under the Social Security Act are grossly inadequate. The maximum payable at the present time is $44 a month on retirement and the average amount of such payments is $21.90 per month. This is below the amount allowable under the public assistance grants to aged persons in many states. The advisory council appointed by the Senate has recommended a change in the formula for computing the benefit which would approximately double the amount of primary benefit, the minimum primary benefit and the family benefit.

Already some states have begun to pay sickness and injury benefits under their unemployment compensation laws. Their purpose has been to provide some income to the wage earner when he is deprived of employment through no fault of his own. During illness a wage earner is in even greater need of income than when employed. The purpose could be accomplished by amending the standards in the Social Security Act which must be met by state laws to obtain approval and be eligible to receive administrative funds from the federal government.

MEDICAL CARE INSURANCE

We urge a broad program of comprehensive medical care insurance.

It is an admitted fact that only persons with incomes in the upper brackets can meet the cost of proper medical care. This means many millions of our people are deprived of necessary medical care. Since the people of our nation are its most valuable resource, this failure to bring medical care within their financial reach is wanton wastage undermining our security and our prosperity.

The findings of the Army medical examiners in regard to draftees during the recent war, indicate the inadequacy of present medical care. There should be a federally operated system covering all persons in the United States and its territories.

This federal aid program should include construction, equipment and operation of medical centers for diagnostic purposes and expansion of training facilities for persons desiring to enter all branches of the medical profession. Private services cannot breach the gap between the cost of medical care and the ability of self-supporting individuals to pay, nor can private effort meet the need for hospital and medical services in sparsely settled areas without federal aid.

MINIMUM WAGE OF ONE DOLLAR AN HOUR

We urge an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act providing for a minimum wage of $1 per hour. The present minimum wage of 40 cents an hour is completely unrealistic and without relation to the present day living standards, cost of living or prevailing rates.

The recent study of the Bureau of Labor Statistics in regard to the city workers' family budget in a number of cities found that the cost of such a budget ranges from $3,000 to $3,450 a year depending on the city. A wage of $1 an hour, 40 hours a week for 52 weeks totals $2,080.

While collective bargaining agreements for many unskilled workers have established wage rates at $1 an hour or above, there still remain millions of workers whose wage rates are below this figure. The great disparity between the annual income needed to furnish the city workers family budget as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the actual family income of millions of workers has forced many wives needed at home and many minor children who should be in school to take employment for the purpose of supplementing the family income. Overcrowding of families by reason of doubling up in homes, improper diet, neglect of health and education and juvenile delinquency all result in large part from substandard family income.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The functions removed from the Department of Labor should be restored and the Labor Department should be provided with adequate funds to make it an effective instrument of the federal government to promote the welfare of the workers of the nation.

a. **Functions.**—The Conciliation Service, the Children's Bureau, and the administration of Federal Workmen's Compensation should be returned to the Department of Labor. The United States Employment Service, the administration of Old Age and Survivors, Unemployment Insurance should be transferred to the Department of Labor. The functions of these agencies relate to the welfare of workers so that their inclusion in the Department of Labor would give assurance of the kind of administration essential to the purposes of their function.

b. **Appropriations.**—The drastic cuts in the appropriations for the whole Department of Labor for past years have greatly reduced its effectiveness. Reductions for the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the fiscal years 1947 and 1948 have greatly handicapped that agency in serving the need for factual information. The labor and research functions of the Children's Bureau have been wiped out and only enforcement of the child labor provisions of the Wage-Hour Law remains. Practically all of the functions of the Division of Labor Standards have been destroyed or drastically reduced. Apprentice training should be expanded. Appropriations for these specialized functions of the Department of Labor, in addition to its general functions, should be sufficient at least to restore them to their full former stature so that the Department of Labor might perform its statutory duty in promoting the welfare of the workers of our nation.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYES

1. General revision of the salary schedules of the Classification Act of 1923, as amended, and elimination of ceilings both as to pay and overtime. General revision of Public Law 134, as amended, bringing grade and pay into conformity with existing economic conditions. Amend and bring up-to-date the Federal Employes' Compensation Act.
2. Provide adequate appropriations for all agencies commensurate with their work load to insure security on the job for employes doing satisfactory work; provide statutory limitations in use of military personnel in civilian jobs; provide a within-service training program within the classified service and a general policy of promotions from within the service with recognition of seniority in all personnel transactions, seniority to be the determinant when other factors are equal.
3. Provide for greater participation in personnel matters by employes and employe organizations, with union employe representation on all wage boards set up to fix the pay of government employes, particularly on Army, Navy, Air Force and departmental wage boards.

FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE LEGISLATION

Time and experience has demonstrated the urgent need for the enactment of fair employment practice legislation with enforcement provisions and a commission to administer said act. I respectfully recommend that you declare in favor of the enactment of this legislation.

Green Asks T-H Repeal, $1 Minimum Wage, Other Measures

Philadelphia.—The American Federation of Labor called upon the Republican National Convention, in session here, to endorse a broad liberal program for the benefit of American workers and the nation.

Appearing before the resolutions committee of the convention, AFL President William Green proposed a 12-point program for inclusion in the Republican platform.

First, on Mr. Green's list, was a demand for the repeal of the Taft-Hartley law and reenactment of the old Wagner Act. Ten months' experience under the Taft-Hartley law has demonstrated it to be a "complete failure," he said.

Other proposals advanced by the AFL leader included:

1. An effective and comprehensive program to curb inflation, with emphasis on voluntary efforts but backed up with government action where and when necessary.
2. A strong declaration for world peace renouncing all forms of imperialism and reasserting this nation's belief in the principles of the United Nations.
3. $1,000,000,000 program of federal aid to education, including the establishment of a Labor Extension Service.
4. An adequate housing program to provide low-rent housing accommodations for low-income families, and to offer reasonable financial assistance to workers desiring to purchase their own homes.
5. Revised tax policies to eliminate excise taxes, increase the personal exemption for income tax purposes, wipe out duplication and overlapping in the tax structure, and plug loopholes in both federal and state tax laws.
6. Extension of the social security system to include all wage earners, substantial increase in all benefits, and sick benefit payments.
7. A broad program of comprehensive medical care insurance for all persons in the United States and its territories, and federal aid to expand medical facilities.
8. An increase in the minimum wage to $1 per hour.
9. The rebuilding and strengthening of the Labor Department to promote the welfare of the workers of the nation.
10. Revision of salary schedules for federal employes and the provision for greater participation by workers' groups in personnel matters and operations of wage-setting boards.
11. Enactment of fair employment practice legislation.

In urging the repeal of the Taft-Hartley law, Mr. Green offered a 10-point indictment of the measure which, he said, "completely undermines trade unions, prevents collective bargaining, and does not promote peaceful industrial relations."

Specifically, Mr. Green charged that the Taft-Hartley law: Undermines the constitutional, civil, and economic rights of workers; has failed to reduce the number of strikes or to encourage the peaceful settlement of disputes; causes delays in collective bargaining through the breakdown of administrative machinery under the law; singles out union officers as a class and legislates against them; invades the civil rights of citizens by prohibiting political activity on the part of unions; resurrects government by injunction thus throwing the power of the courts on the side of the employer; contains provisions inviting destructive and delaying litigation in labor disputes; denies to unions the right to negotiate union security conditions without interference; and outlaws secondary boycotts which in effect compels unions to contribute to their own destruction.

Lesinski Denies Pearson's Charges

Washington.—Speaking before the House, Representative John Lesinski of Michigan denied flatly the charge made by columnist Drew Pearson to the effect that he is one of a group of Congressmen which is bottling up the federal aid to education bill and preventing action by the House.

The prolabor Congressman declared:

"Let me say that that is one of those damnable lies that has always been produced by Drew Pearson. I have no authority to tell the members of this House who is going to bring that bill up. Before Mr. Peagson publishes any such misleading information he should first ask me or any of these gentlemen that he has named as being against their bill, and ask us what our position is, which he has not done."